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EASTERN EUROPEAN INTELLIGENCER

15 May 1968

Ulbricht "Vacationing" in the USSR

East German leader Walter Ulbricht reportedly is vacationing in the USSR. Ulbricht's vacation plans were announced by GDR media on 8 May prior to his departure for Moscow and the "summit conference" of orthodox Eastern European communist leaders. On 9 May it was announced that Ulbricht would continue his vacation in the USSR following the conclusion of the conference. Just in case anyone missed it, East German media announced again on 12 May that the "boss" was vacationing in the Soviet Union.

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Czechoslovak President Awards Medal to Victim of Slansky Trials

President Svoboda has awarded the Order of the Republic posthumously to Rudolf Margolius, former Deputy Foreign Minister who was executed in 1952 after the Slansky trials.

The award takes on significance because the Czechoslovak press has recently accused the USSR of forcing the trials on the Czechoslovak party, mentioning Mikoyan and other lesser figures by name as having come to Prague with a blueprint for the bloody purge. Slansky and others were juridically rehabilitated in 1963, but up to now no move had been made to restore them to places of honor in Czechoslovak history.

Moscow probably will react abrasively to Svoboda's action and to the citation which accompanied the medal, describing Margolius' "long, active and selfless work in the working class movement, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, and for merits in the construction of socialism."

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Excluded from automatic downgrading and declassification

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Hungarian-Polish Friendship Treaty to be Signed

Polish party boss Gomulka and Premier Cyrankiewicz arrived in Budapest on 15 May where they will sign a new treaty of friendship and mutual cooperation.

According to a 15 May announcement of the Hungarian news service, the Polish delegation also will discuss "problems of further developing Hungarian-Polish relations" and important international problems. The Hungarians' emphasis on bilateral relations could represent an admission that all is not harmonious between the two parties, and is an attempt to take the play away from the problem of Czechoslovakia. The most glaring disparity of views lies in the parties' respective attitudes toward the Czech reforms. It is doubtful, however, that such problems have affected the provisions of the new treaty whose final draft was approved almost three months ago.

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Polish US Ambassador in Trouble

Polish Ambassador to the US Jerzy Michalowski may be in political trouble with the regime in Warsaw.

Michalowski, who was posted to Washington only last year, told a State Department officer recently that he would invite

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him to lunch in a week or so, "If I am still alive then." When the officer suggested that Michalowski was joking the Ambassador replied, "I hope I am."

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Albanian Treatment of Czech National Day

For the first time in recent years Albania gave low-key recognition to Czech National Day on 9 May. Two low level government officials attended a reception at the Czech embassy in Tirana and President of the Presidium, Haxhi Lleshi, expressed Albania's good will to the people of Czechoslovakia in a telegram to President Svoboda.

What this sudden departure from the Albanian norm means is not clear. In the final analysis it may reflect the dilemma Tirana finds itself in--the Hoxha regime is undoubtedly pleased with the breakdown of Soviet hegemony, but paradoxically finds the independent and liberal measures adopted by Dubcek as unacceptable ideologically as the Soviet inspired policies of the Novotny regime.

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Yugoslav Medical Personnel Protest Delays in Salary Payments

All medical personnel of Ljubljana's hospitals and clinics--except for emergency crews--walked off the job for several hours on 18 April in an unprecedented protest because of an 18-day delay in salary payments.

This protest is only one of a number recently reported in the press and is indicative of the increasingly serious financial straits in which Yugoslav enterprises are finding themselves. While the issue of prompt salary payments is only one of the numerous problems facing the Yugoslav economy, the fact that the country's health and welfare services are now directly affected by Yugoslavia's economic difficulties underscores the seriousness of the problem.

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Slovenian-East German Joint Enterprise Agreed Upon

Another major joint investment agreement was signed on 20 April between Cinkarna (zinc works) of Celje, Slovenia and the Vereinigung Volkseigener Betriebe Lank und Farben of East Berlin.

The agreement is for a 15-year joint investment for construction and operation in Celje of a \$22 million titanium-dioxide plant. Yugoslav participation is set at 51% and East Germany at 49%. Belgrade appears to have timed the signing to follow closely the joint agreement signed between Zastava automobile works in Serbia and Fiat works of Italy to demonstrate Yugoslavia's non-alignment as a market for foreign investments. The East German agreement also helps Yugoslav economic reformers counter charges that foreign investment in Yugoslavia represents the opening wedge of a movement to reestablish capitalism in Yugoslavia.

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25X1German-Soviet Friendship Society Founded in West Berlin

The West Berlin Republican Club has advocated cooperation between the city's leftist student groups and the West Berlin SED (communist) party. The call for cooperation by the ultra leftist organization is more a pro forma gesture on the Club's part, since the SED-West has been aiding the leftist students in demonstrations for some time. One possible result of the announcement may be the establishment of a German-Soviet Friendship Society in West Berlin located on the busy Kurfuerstendamm. Soviet Ambassador to East Germany, Pyotr Abrasimov, was the new Society's first guest on 13 May.

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